

Guidelines

Title:	Records retention guidelines
Related to:	DHS OHA-010-018-01
Effective date:	01/01/2016

Purpose

This document provides guidance related to how, when and where public records should be stored to meet the requirements of DHS and OHA retention policy.

Guidelines

1. A public record (hereafter, record or records) is a document, book, paper, file, sound recording, machine readable electronic record or other material, regardless of form or characteristic prepared, owned, use or retained by DHS and OHA in connection with the transaction of the public's business, though some records may be exempt from disclosure.
2. The records retention policy helps DHS and OHA comply with the law and ensure that records are available in a useable format for public records requests, litigation and historical purposes.
 - a. Saving and destroying records in accordance with approved retention schedules protects the agency from unnecessary expense related to record storage.
 - b. Saving and destroying records in accordance with approved retention schedules helps the agency limit liability.
3. Approved network storage sites include shared drives, home drives and systems such as OR-Kids and MMIS which are designed for long term data storage and accessibility.
 - a. Use the personal home directory or H: drive for personal files relating to specific job duties such as working drafts and confidential personnel files. Other personal file storage may include the employee's resume, personnel files, benefit files, and file material for state-paid courses of study.
 - b. Use the assigned shared directory, either the I: or S: drive for business files that are accessed, used, viewed, or otherwise shared with other employees and for final versions of documents that need to be retained for one year or more, including reports, correspondence, project documents and reference materials.
 - c. In order to prevent the loss of information, computer drives such as desktop storage and external storage such as USB drives should be used only for temporary storage.
4. Saving records in PDF, paper, TIFF, MP3 or MP4 formats, or other formats specified by the State Archivist, allows the agency to provide access to records long term and limits the likelihood of loss.
 - a. Staff should operate under the assumption that every document or email related to agency business that is created, received or retained in the course of their work is a record and falls within a retention schedule.

- b. In general, records that have a retention period of three years or less can be saved in their native format because software versions are unlikely to become incompatible over that period of time.
 - c. In general, records that have a retention period between five and 10 years, including those created in Excel or Word should be saved in PDF, paper, TIFF, MP3 or MP4 formats.
 - d. For records with a retention period of more than 10 years, staff should work closely with a program or office lead or the records custodian to ensure the storage method meets Archivist retention requirements.
5. Not every version of a working document needs to be saved to meet the requirements of the retention policy. Staff should learn the retention schedules for the types of documents they routinely work with.
- a. Draft documents generally do not have to be saved as a record for more than a year after the document is finalized and may be saved in their native format.
 - b. Final versions of documents should be saved in a way that allows them to remain accessible as records throughout their full retention period.
 - c. Careful consideration should be given to retention of records reflecting decisions or the decision-making process, including emails or hearing records, and especially items concerned with policy, business services, budget and administrative actions.
6. In general, staff should not use email as an archiving tool.
- a. Email that needs to be retained for more than a year should be stored outside the email system.
 - b. Email that needs to be retained for more than a year should be saved with related materials.
 - c. Email can be saved with related electronic materials in PDF format directly from Outlook.
7. In general, staff should not use text messaging for official purposes. Routine communications that are an acceptable use of text messaging include:
- a. Scheduling.
 - b. Requesting a call or an email on a matter without substantive discussion.
 - c. Requesting or offering logistical assistance. (Can you help me get these boxes to the capitol?)
 - d. Forwarding contact information.
 - e. Explaining your current whereabouts or inquiring about someone else's. (I'm in a meeting in Room 45. Are you around?)
 - f. Describing facts or events not related to the substantive work of the agency. (Spilled coffee on myself right before my presentation.)
 - g. Describing facts or events that have been or will be separately recorded. (Mr. Jones just told the committee that our bill would cost taxpayers \$3 million.)
 - h. Asking about events that do not relate to the substance of the agency's work or that will be separately recorded. (Has Mr. Jones testified in committee yet?)
8. It is recommended that staff review their files annually for retention purposes.
- a. Staff should purge documents with an expired retention period.
 - b. Staff should consult with their program or office lead or the records custodian:
 - A. Prior to purging if they have any questions about the applicable retention period.
 - B. To archive documents which are more than five years old and no longer used but which have a retention period of longer than five years.

References

[Chapter 192 of the Oregon Revised Statutes](#)

[Section 166 of the Oregon Administrative Rules](#)

[General retention schedules](#)

Special retention schedules

[Background Check Unit retention schedule](#)

[Medical Assistance Program retention schedule](#)

[Public Health retention schedule](#)

[State Hospital retention schedule](#)

[Child Welfare, Vocational Rehabilitation, Self-Sufficiency retention schedule](#)

Aging and People with Disabilities retention assistance manual

[Self-sufficiency retention procedures](#)

[Vocational Rehabilitation policy manual](#)

Forms referenced

Related policies

[DHS/OHA 010-018 Records retention and management](#)

[OHA 010-018 Records retention and management structure](#)

[DHS 010-010 Records requests, fees and waivers](#)

[OHA 010-010 Records requests, fees and waivers](#)

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